

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. **09/883,334**
Amendment dated March 9, 2004
Reply to OA of **September 9, 2003**

REMARKS

Claims 46-52 are in the application, with claim 46 being withdrawn from consideration as being for a non-elected invention, and claims 47, 49 and 51 standing finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Radford, et al. and claims 48, 50 and 52 standing finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Radford, et al. in view of Funke.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the final rejections of the claims particularly in view of the amendments made to the claims herein which specify that the claimed process involves moving the works along a circular path while maintaining them in spaced apart states by housing each of the works in separate compartments of the support member.

This feature, which is common to all of the claims as amended is clearly absent from the process as taught by Radford, et al. wherein the compartmented pallets are each intended to house a plurality of small sized fuel pellets 22 arranged to fill the respective pellets by aligning them end-to-end into columns and side-by-side rows wherein, instead of a single work being housed in each compartment as required by the claimed process, in the apparatus of Radford, et al., "a typical pallet 16 may have 38 rows and 19 columns of fuel pellets 22" (col. 4, lines 5 to 7 of Radford, et al.).

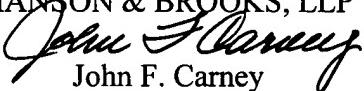
In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter this Amendment in the case and pass the application to issue. In the event the Examiner is constrained to retain the rejection of claims in the application, it is requested that the Examiner nonetheless enter the amendments to claims 47, 49 and 51 herein in order to place the application in better condition for appeal.

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On the other hand, however, if the Examiner finds that minor revision may be required to render the claims in the application satisfactory, it is requested that he call the Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below in order to expedite the changes required to place the application in condition for allowance.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

ARMSTRONG, KRATZ, QUINTOS,
HANSON & BROOKS, LLP

John F. Carney
Attorney for Applicant
Reg. No. 20,276

JFC/sc
Atty. Docket No. **991074B**
Suite 1000
1725 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 659-2930



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